A DIALOGUE ON SCOTLAND's GLORY, IN ITS DEFORMITY.

Applicable to PEOPLE in different Stations of Life,

AS

REPRESENTED,

BY John Breues

FIVE REGULAR and FRIENDLY BOTTLE COMPANIONS.

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M,DCC,XXIV.

TO THE READER.

THERE is nothing more common, than for Authors to make an apology with their work, even tho' done to perfection; but, What apology ſhall I make, for the following obſervations, when every ſentence hath need to be corrected? But now, as it is in your hand, I ſhall only deſire one favour of you, namely, to do as I did, ſome days ago, I went to a Glovers ſhop, for a pair of gloves, he ſhowed me a large parcel, and when I found one pair that fitted me, I put it on.

And, I ſhall only aſk the favour of you, on peruſal of the following pages, to do the ſame; and if nothing in them be applicable to you, it is only trying another, as I would have done, had I not been fitted to my mind; but, though this is but a ſmall aſſortment, yet, hopes you may be ſerved before we part, if you pleaſe to look over what is in your hand, and if not, I only aſk the favour of you, not to deſpiſe what you do not chuſe, which cuſtom is too common, eſpecially, by ſuch as value themſelves upon their own opinion.

The

The Bottle Companions, Reſpecting Scotland's GLORY,

in its DEFORMITY.

A. NOW Gentlemen, as we are met and having no buſineſs, let us have the affairs of the country for a ſubject.

B. To enter upon that, (as affairs are now going on) will be no entertainment.

A. What mean you by that, Mr B?

B. What I mean by that, is, by conſidering the diſmal ſituation, in which our country is now in.

A. Pray, Sir, upon what account, do you reckon our country ſo diſmal, for I am of opinion, that Scotland in general, was never in a more flouriſhing circumſtance, than it is now in.

B. I wiſh, Sir, you would explain yourſelf, and make what you aledge appear to be truth, for this to me is a myſtery.

A. I hope, I ſhall make it appear to a demonſtration, my only difficulty is, it will detain us too long, mean time, as we have no other buſineſs, I ſhall endeavour not only, to give you my reaſons, but hope even to convince you of the tru h of what I ſay.

B. I doubt not, but you may amuſe us a little; but, I am of opinion, you will find that a difficult point.

A. Sir, not to ſpend time by introduction, pray, be ſo good as conſider, the country where you will ſee delightful incloſers, where was formerly nothing but moors, marſhes, and by appearance, fruitleſs commons; now producing good grain, hay, and plenty of planting, &c. And next, our good made roads, and fine bridges, where people formerly, not only endangered, but many loſt their lives. And do you not ſee our country-farmers, in ſtead of labouring with their ſervants, as formerly, going about preſonatng landed gentlemen, and their wives and daughters in the habit of ladies of quality,

quality. Was ever our country in ſuch a flouriſhing ſituation? I am willing to refer unto hiſtory, or the report of our fore fathers.

B. Sir, allowing your obſervations to be juſt; with reſpect to incloſings and improvements of land, what end does that anſwer to the poor, who are reſtricted by law, from any benefit thereof? And even, when incloſed and improven, (if good ground) is it not planed out for graſs to horſes, and almoſt the corn is put to the ſame uſe. So that, beſides the good ground laid in graſs, it may be preſumed, that one half of the oats is given to horſes; and conſequently, mankind has not one half aſſigned for their maintenance: and, to add to this misfortune, our land was formerly (in general) plowed with oxen, and by feeding them, when old, they were for mens meat, whereas the horſes, when old, becomes only feeding for dogs. And, I beg leave to obſerve, that, if our farmers would conſider the different charge of maintaining

ing horſes, and the high price paid for them, with the low price they receive for them, when old, that to plough with oxen would be more to their advantage, by comparing buying and ſelling, and the different charge of feeding together. As to our roads, the public has not only the charge of making them, but even toll, to pay for liberty, to travel upon them, or even for croſing a bridge. Is not this, I ſay, an additional burden the public has to groan under? And, with reſpect to our country farmers, and their wives imitating, if not exceeding, our landed gentlemen and ladies, that is no ornament to the country, as many of them is raiſed upon the wreck of others; who, by theſe means, are deprived of many things, neceſſary for bringing up their family; and, this is the fatal conſequence of your great and grand farmers, by which a few is raiſed to grandeur, and many reduced to poverty and want.

A. But, Sir, I will yet go further, as you

you ſeem to deſpiſe, what I think, is our glory. Have we not now, fine ſchools, MANTUAMAKERS and MILLINERS, grand play-houſes, dancing-ſchools, balls, and concerts; is not our youth thereby qualified, both by example and practice, to behave, each imitating the ſtation above their own rank. And, conſidering the elegance and ſumptuouſneſs of our tables, with the grandeur of our dreſs; not only of one rank of people, or ſtage of life, (both young and old,) but all in general, adorned beyond what ever was to be obſerved in any former age. Yea, I may ſay, Scotland never attained to ſuch a pitch of grandeur as now.

B. As to our ſchools, they muſt be owned of great uſe to the young generation, when vices are not tolerated, and virtue is incouraged. But, as to our mantuamakers, and milliners, it is known to be one brench of their buſineſs, to incurage and contrive new faſhons. How common is it for young women to addreſs their parents, for what

what is called faſhionable, until the parents thro' importunity is brought to ſubmit, and even grant, what his, or her, circumſtances can ſcarcely afford; by which, many are brought to great ſtraits; and, ſome even through want, obliged to be ſupported by charity, (when old age and infirmity is in their lot) and this is too often the fruits of following the faſhions, much praiſed and incouraged, by whom you call miliners and mantuamakers. But, as you mention playhouſes, balls, dancing-ſchools, and concerts, I am ſorry that you, or any perſon of good ſence, ſhould look upon ſuch diverſions with pleaſure, as they are a mean of divetring young people from buſineſs and induſtry; leading their minds into motives, which are ſo oppoſite to virtue, that they ſhall be nameleſs. And, as to the eloquence of our tables, and thē grandeur of our dreſs, theſe are (in my opinion) good of themſelves, were they carried on with moderation, and as circumſtances would admit of.

But,

But, Sir, how many of our young people, are thereby betrayed, out of themſelves, by imagining to be what they really are not; (by houſe funiture, elegant tables, and fine clothes) I mean, to be as grand, if not grander, than ſuch both in ſtation and circumſtance can attain to. So that, the mind of many are diſtracted, with anxiety and ambition; and this, Sir, is the fruits of our grand tables, fine furniture, and elegant dreſs. And I am of opinion, that our children, or grand-children, will reflect with ſorrow, that in their youth, they had been betrayed, from every prudent ſtep, by the indulgence of parents, by ſtudying more to feed and dreſs them up in imitation of their betters, than conſidering their own circumſtances, or even how they were to be ſupported in the world.—It is to be lamented, that by obſerving the age, that in general ſpeaking, our youth upon the nurſes arm, and when going to ſchool, any ſtranger to parents and child, would judge them the

children of parents in a much higher ſtation of life, than really they are; and, where will this land, (at miſery and want) except ſuch as have large fortunes to ſupport them; and even though this be their lot, without prudence and induſtry, that will ſoon be exhauſted, of which we have many inſtances.

A. Sir, You ſeem inclined to condemn, what by the generality of the age, is much admired, eſpecially by the polite part of it, and to tell you the truth, if our young people be curbed, from what is common with others, parents can have no peace with them.

B. Sir, I do not doubt, but you are ſpeaking from experience, and notwithſtanding, that you are in moderate good circumſtances, yet, Sir, allow me to aſk you, that ſuppoſing you to be in a few days called of the ſtage, by death, how far would your ſubſtance go, in ſupporting your young family, eſpecially, when they are ſtrangers to ſuch

branches

branches of buſineſs, as is neceſſary for ſupporting a family. I am ſurpriſed to ſee ſo many young women, heading nothing but gallantry; and as it were, deſpiſing what is prudent. How common, not only, in your ſtation and circumſtance, but even many who has but little more than their own induſtry to depend upon, do think it a diſgrace to do the ſame neceſſary work, which their mother was employed in; and which, by GOD's bleſſing, has inherited them, at the leaſt procured, ſome ſmall help to their indurſty, if they be frugal, and if not, it will ſoon be ſpent. And, as you have ſome daughters, as we are now upon this ſubject, I will preſume to give you my poor thoughts, viz. If you wiſh your daughters well, and well married, force them to apply to buſineſs. I do not mean milliners and mantuamakers, theſe are now ſo multiplied, that in a ſhort time, they moſt groan under want of buſineſs; and then what can they do, as they affect to be gentlewomen, and

not proper matches for their equals. It is not the gaiety of life, that will engage a prudent man to match with a woman, when he ſees circumſtances and buſineſs cannot ſupport a family at ſuch a high rate, as ſuch way of life will require. And, Sir, I muſt add, that by this circumſtance, which is ſo glaring, in the age, our young women affecting to be what they are not, aiming ſo high, that men who are their equals, deſpiſe them in their mind, and this may be aſſigned, for one reaſon, why ſo many valuable women is deprived of that happineſs, 'till they become old maids, and then willing to throw themſelves in the boſom of their inferior; whom formerly they would deſpiſe, as not their equal. I therefore wiſh, you would ſeriouſly exhort your daughters, not to frighten their equals from honourable deſigns with them, if they intend to be married; but if they intend to die old maids, they may dreſs as gaudy and fooliſh as they pleaſe; and what they will ſuffer, will be the tanting

ing proverb of others; I might have enlarged further upon this ſubject, but ſhall ſtop; wiſhing you, and others, would endeavour to have no hand in the miſfortune of your own children, by indulging them too much in their youth; which will increaſe, as they grow in years; (if a caſt of ſovereign grace do not prevent,) I might have added, that by the gallantry, many are indulged in, that they fooliſhly imagine themſelves to be the only perſons obſerveable.

C. Gentlemen, you know we meet here, to have our bottle, and a little converſation; and you, (as many does) have taken the whole converſation to yourſelves, to which we have patiently ſubmitted, even though we have equal right, as we are to pay our ſhare of the drink.

A. & B. Then, Sir, we give you all liberty to uſe your freedom, two bottles are drunk and two to come in, which will be equal time to you, and we ſhall hear you with patience, as you have heard us.

C.

C. As we not only have equal right to our ſhare of the converſation, but as you agree; therefore, I ſhall in very few words obſerve, that B. has been too keen, upon his obſervations, for to drop your former animadverſions, I think Scotland now is in a very commendable and praiſe-worthy ſituation. We have now able members of ſociety, eſpeciallv thoſe in offices in law, or goſpel; and religion is now attended to, not only by people in offices of the church, but by the generality of the age; and conſequently we are a people worthy of adoration.

D. Sir, I wiſh your obſervations were juſt; but the ſcripture, which cannot be broken, is, "The tree is known by its fruit." Now, Mr C. as this is a truth which cannot be denied, I hope you will give me leave to obſerve, that we have but little of that to boaſt of, for if we obſerve the mark the lawyers aim at is money, whether the cauſe be bad or good, the client poor or rich. And it is generally ſuppoſed, that

principles

principles has little weight with too many of them in general, as they will (at leaſt the moſt part of them) contend againſt it, as well as for it, where they are certain of good payment, and where then is their religion. And, as to the generation in general, you know we are all baptiſed, and ſolemnly engaged, by the oath of our parents, to be Chriſtians; which oath we approve and confirm in our own perſons, by our general profeſſion, and by attending divine worſhip. But, Sir, What appearance have we in our practice, we go to church in common form; but it is to be feared, tho' the body be there, the mind and attention is ſome-what like the fools eyes, (if not through the whole earth) yet placed upon various ſubjects; I might have ſaid objects, and when out of the confinement of church-walls, &c. we for the moſt part, ſhow but ſmall ſigns in practice that we are Chriſtians. And, Sir, we in profeſſion go a ſtep further, I mean, we not only make a common profeſſion, but

but diſtinguiſh ourſelves, not only entering into covenant with GOD, but frequently renewing our engagements, by partaking of the ſacramental elements, as a public acknowledgment of our faith, and belief of the truth of the goſpel. And, that we have not only choſen the LORD for our GOD, but that we have ſolemnly engaged to worſhip glorify and honour him in our ſtation; and this, Sir, is the nature of our oath, and an oath is binding. Another engagement is come under, as a ſolemn oath, namely, by marriage vows, which many come under, as in the ſight of GOD, and often no more regarded than common YEA, or NAY, is not this viſible perjury? When acting contrary, not only to the oath, but to the peremptory command of GOD. Another engagement, (by a ſolemn oath) and that is to the king, by ſuch as are employed in his offices, both cuſtom-houſe and exciſe; and however ſolemn that oath is, what regard is ſhown to it by many, who for various

various reaſons, betrays themſelves into perjury, by explaining their oath by their own and others invention. We have more oaths and engagements, binding likewiſe amongſt us, namely, our church officers, deacons, elders and teaching-elders, which we call miniſters. Now, Sir, to conſider all theſe ſolemn engagements, take the age in general, how are theſe ſolemn oaths performed? You know even betwixt man and man, breach of vows are condemnable, and much more, when a covenant is tranſacted between parties; and when we conſider that GOD is a party, and that all the above vows, covenants and engagements are to him, and in his preſence, and often before many witneſſes. Now, Sir, as in all theſe engagements, we bind and oblige ourſelves, to adhere thereto, from time to time, and if ſuch breaches of covenant, even among men, be criminal, can it be ſuppoſed, that the great LORD of heaven and earth, will overlook ſuch great and groſs affronts from us, who

 are

are not only mean creatures (though dignified above the beaſts of the earth, and the fouls of heaven) but even ſinful creatures; who by ſuch engagements diſregard, deſpiſe and mock GOD to his face. Now, Sir, When we obſerve the manner of too many parents, and the licentious life they follow, with the neglect of commanded duties to which they engaged, I might have added many vows, which by ſome are no more regarded, yea, not ſo much, as the conditions of hiring ſervants, or of being hired to ſervice; except ſo far, as it agrees with their own nature, theſe are both conditional oaths and vows. As alſo, our king's ſervants, ſuch as are employed as officers to the cuſtom-houſe, or exciſe-officers, who is ſworn as a deed of truth, in the moſt ſolemn manner, and likewiſe our maſters of ſhips, who are frequently purged by oath. And now, Sir, when we conſider the ſolemnity of theſe oaths, and what gloſſes is, by many put upon them, to blind their own judgement,

ment, in order, that withour check of conſcience they may indulge themſelves, or others, without regard to GOD's law, or their ſolemn oath. Now, Mr C. I leave you to judge, if ſuch may not be without breach of charity, reckoned perjured perſons deſtitute of principles.

C. I do not differ far from you, but I thought you had in your view, thoſe who communicate, and thoſe who are inſtalled in church offices, who are alſo under oath.

D. You are very right, but thoſe I have mentioned are ſworn as in the preſence of GOD, and as they ſhall anſwer to him at the day of judgment, for the performance of their vows.—But, Sir, theſe in my opinion differ from thoſe mentioned, as I ſaid before, which are vows made as in GOD's ſight, and as the perſon vowing is to anſwer to him for the performance of their engagements. But in the act of communicating, formerly mentioned, GOD is both witneſs and party, and conſe-

quently it is a real covenant. And as to our church officers, they in a ſingular manner engage to act for GOD, and what they do in his name, as inſtalled in offices under him, being engaged under the reſtrictions deſcribed in his holy word. Now, Sir, let us conſider thoſe how they act under their ſtation, and agreeable to their ingagement.

C. Sir, of this we ſhould be glad, but fear it will detain us too long, as we have to go to reſt, mean time, you may give us a ſhort hint upon the ſubject.

D. I ſhall oblige you in that, for paſſing many things, I ſhall only aſk you a few queſtions, as they occur unto me, and not to mention many glaring vices, now practiſed in open defiance of all law, both civil and eccleſiaſtical, and in a manner connived with, by people of whom better things might be expected; ſo I ſay, notwithſtanding, I could give many inſtances thereof, ſhall drop and refer to another

ther time, as 'tis too large a ſubject to enter upon, as our time is ſhort, mean time, give me leave to obſerve, that the law is ſevere againſt a ſervant for breaking term with his maſter, but much more againſt an apprentice, who had ſigned his indenture, and not fulfilled the conditions therein contained, or even acted contrary thereto, I might have added military-men, who deſerts their colours, and it is well known is puniſhable with death. Now, gentlemen, as this is the caſe even among ourſelves, How can we ſuppoſe ſuch to eſcape, who has not only profeſſed the Chriſtian religion by common profeſſion, but even by oaths and vows, and many confirmed the ſame, by publicly covenanting with the Almighty GOD. So I ſay, How can ſuch eſcape the ſeverity of GOD's juſtice, againſt ſuch as perjure themſelves, by neglect of duty, and acting contrary to their engagements. It is written, " Better not to vow, than to vow and not to pay." But, how dreadful for duſt and aſhes,

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to vow to the great ſovereign of heaven and earth, yet no deſign to perform.

C. But, we would gladly hope your ſuſpicion of the age is not well founded, as we are better than you and many ſuppoſe, and repreſent us to be.

D. I wiſh it were as you ſeem to think, mean time, paſſing the ſolemn engagements by parents at baptiſms, huſbands and wives at marriages, with cuſtom-houſe and exciſe officers; how ſolemnly they ſwear, and how little theſe oaths are regarded, or even reflected upon, but as frivilous, eſpecially, when intereſted conſtructions are put upon them, by ſuch as chooſe to diſregard them, either for intereſt, or other gratifications; theſe oaths, as I ſaid before, are ſo gloſſed over by too many, that I ſhall leave them to GOD, and their own conſcience. But here, I am only to aſk you, how you think any perſon, who has not only made oath ſolemnly as in GOD's ſight, and as we ſhall anſwer unto him, for the performing of them, but even by ſolemnly

lemnly engageing ourſelves in covenants? So I ſay, How unbecoming, and yet how common, is it for ſuch as goe that length in religion, to betray their profeſſion, and bring a reproach upon the religion they profeſs; which tends much to incourage immorallity and injuſtice; which is now become national habits amongſt us. When we conſider the deliberate plans laid down, and executed if poſſible, of cheating and betraying others, for nothing but private intereſt, and even acting, as if we neither believed in GOD, nor expected to anſwer before him, for our breach of vows, nor for acting contrary to his laws, and to our ſolemn engagements. Now, Sir, to ſave time, I ſhall only obſerve, viz.

1. How common is it for ſuch, when they obſerve an honeſt neighbour in a proſperous way, to uſe intereſt with land-lord, land-lady, factor, or others, who are intimate with them, to have their poſſeſſion without regard, either to the law of GOD, common honeſty, or good

good neighbourhood. Is this becoming a profeſſing Chriſtian, or even an office bearer in the church?

2. How common is it for men, artfully to prevail with women, to conſent to the forfeiting their chaſtity, and after having gratified their deſire with them, abhor and deſpiſe them, as if they were common whores, and tho' in the mean time, they are inſtrumental in bringing them to miſery and diſgrace, if not to ruin. Now, Sir, is not this lamentably become common amongſt us, and much to our diſgrace, and to be feared, in a ſhort time, will put the warrantable and honourable cuſtom of marriage out of faſhion.

3. How common is it now, for people to draw in people to give them credit, and when they think proper to conceal their ſubſtance, or by ſigning over to a friend what they have, and then call in creditors, repreſent to them their pretended poverty, and honeſty with loſſes; and ſpokeſmen to reaſon down the

the reſt of the creditors to a compoſition, after which, their concealed ſubject is produced in pretence of being aſſiſted by friends; I might have added, that many give trades, patrimony and education to their children, upon other peoples ſubſtance, and even when thoſe children are raiſed, both by ſtation and circumſtance thereby, never pays back any of that money to the ſufferers; but, if aſked by the perſon upon whoſe money they were raiſed, though in neceſſary circumſtances, the anſwer will be (diſregarding the law of conſcience) theſe, or ſuch words, "It is none of my debt, but my parents, and I will pay none of it." Now, Sir, is not this as bad as receiving ſtollen goods, and knowing them to be ſtole, which being oppoſite to religion, common juſtice, and the peremptory command of GOD.

I might 4thly have mentioned the artful way of impoſing upon people by trade: how common is it by many to repreſent either beaſts, or other ar-

 ticles,

ticles, to be what they know they are not, and ſo deceive the purchaſer, who repoſes a confidence in them, as honeſt and upright people; many inſtances of this nature might be inſtanced, which I ſhall forbear to mention, and more eſpecially, as I have intruded too far upon your time, only obſerve, that thoſe proceedings bring a great reproach upon our holy religion; and I might have added that, when any difference happens, inſtead of refering to men of judgement and honeſty, for equity and juſtice, and a friendly agreement, law is applied to, by which friendſhip is ended, our ſubſtance exhauſted, and our own folly made public: Is this a ſpirit of Chriſtianity?

C. Sir, You have detained us a little, mean time, you have omitted ſundry things, which we expected you would have obſerved, and in particular, with reſpect to theſe, whom we call paſtors and teachers, and likewiſe members of ſeſſions.

D. I conſidered we had but ſhort time

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to ſit, and again, intended nothing further, than to point out ſome few habits, now greatly in vogue amongſt us, not only unbecoming theſe who profeſs religion in common, and are ſworn thereto, and by many ſolemnly engaged, but even in contempt of the peremptory command, viz: "As you would, that others ſhould do unto you, do you ſo unto them." Now, gentlemen, ſuppoſing you were the injured perſon, as formerly mentioned, or otherwiſe, by people who not only profeſs religion in a common form, but deſtinguiſh themſelves, as I have mentioned, What would your thoughts of them be? I am afraid you would look upon them as perjured covenant breakers, and mockers of GOD. As to our paſtors and teachers, with members of ſeſſions, we have not time to deſcribe them, neither would it be entertaining.

C. Sir, notwithſtanding we have ſhort time, yet we will be glad to have your obſervations upon that rank of men.

D. As you have propoſed, I ſhall in very few words, give you my thoughts, there is ſome alive who has had the pleaſure of obſerving our teachers, whom we call paſtors, teaching both by doctrine and converſation, the ways of true religion; and members of ſeſſions joining, as it were hand in hand with them, for encouraging the ſame, and diſcouraging vice and immorality: but, now it is to be lamented, that we have to obſerve little ſigns of religion, in the families of many members of ſeſſions; or their being ſtraitned in their practice, from any thing that will enrich them, either by ſmuggling, monopoliſing farms, or trade, tho' not only to the hurt, but to the ruin of others. As to our teachers, we have to obſerve too many of them, ready to deliver to us from the ſtrength of education, a learned diſcourſe, and thereby entertain us ſome ſhort (and many but very ſhort) time, on the Sabbath. And upon many conſiderations, we are ready to think, that an officer in the army, &c. would have

have ſitted them as well, if not better, than the character they bear.

C. Sir, we would gladly know how this happens, that ſuch viſible alterations are to be obſerved in our church; as the ſame ſtandard ſtill ſtand in force, and the members are bound under the ſame reſtrictment; and are ſworn to the ſame performance as formerly.

D. Gentlemen, many reaſons might be given for that; but, as our time is ſhort, I ſhall only mention a few, viz: You know that in former times, there was little proſpect of riches, or grandeur, to be expected by thoſe who intended to be miniſters of the goſpel: and (it may be preſumed) that few would lay out themſelves for that ſacred office, but ſuch as had the intereſt of religion at heart; and conſequently when eſtabliſhed in that office, they conſcientiouſly acted from theſe principles. The event whereof was, the goſpel ſucceeded, vice and immorality was ſuppreſſed. But, now there is fine manſes, good glebes, ſtipends, and grand

ladies

ladies in view, as temptations, to which is added, chief ſeats at meetings, and ſalutations in the ſtreets; all theſe being engaging to our youths. So that if parents be in circumſtance, they moſt be made ſcholars, (I mean one in the family;) though often to the hurt of the reſt: and often much to the hurt of others, from whom the parents have credit; there being often a vanity in making a Son a Mr —— and as if he were ſo begotted to religion, I mean the intended ſtudent; tho' to be feared the above objects is his principle motives, without regard to church afairs: yet, by parents, relations and others, he moſt be eſteemed a good lad, and an honour to the family; which often is the parent's motive in hurting his family, if not drawing himſelf into debt, which his ſon tho' pretending to be a miniſter, never look upon it as his debt; which is a ſcandal with a witneſs. And now having got his learning, tho' even upon other peoples ſubſtance; intimacy muſt be made with ſome members

bers of preſbytery (eſpecially with ſuch as himſelf) to make friends againſt his tryall come; which he going through right or wrong, having made friends, is licenced; and then, when a vacancy happens, all means are uſed to get intereſt with the patron, who upon the preſbytery's judging him qualified for the office, gives him a preſentation, and then moſt be crammed down the throat of (perhaps) a reclaiming congregation; and no regard ſhown them, neither is their reaſons ſuſtained, tho' never ſo juſt; and no wonder, when a majority of preſbytery is the ſame with himſelf. Now, gentlemen, you ſee the vacant congregation ſettled, with not only a ſtipend gatherer, but even a good farmer: a fortune hunter: a ſtipend raiſer; (if law permit) and, perhaps, a talketive gentleman; and a good bottle companion. Now, you ſee, I have given you him with his motives for learning, and ſettled him a reverend brother miniſter of a pariſh, and member of the church; from which, I leave you

you to judge, what is to be expected of him. As to the members of seſſions in former times, they were choſen, as they were men regular in their conduct, ſound in their principles, (according to their knowledge) being blameleſs. But, what ſhall we think of ſuch as are come under ſuch vows, as they come under, and with other unjuſtifiable ſteps, graſps at other mens property: inrich themſelves by unlawful trade, and yet continues members of ſeſſions, to the diſgrace of the whole, and moſt have a principal hand in chuſing new members, when wanted. So you may judge how the vacancy will be filled.

E. Gentlemen, ſuppoſing you have had each your ſhare in the converſation; though I am not of your party, yet, being in your company, can do no leſs, than inform you whom I do reſemble, namely, a country man, who being in Edinburgh, ſtept in to the parliament-houſe to hear a cauſe, of which he knew very well; who hearing the

firſt advocate, he told his neighbour, "All that that gentleman ſaid is true." The other advocate roſe and made a ſpeech in oppoſition, as uſual: the country man ſays, "All that this man ſays is true. Likewiſe, now, gentlemen, I am as ſimple as he was; I think that you have all ſpoke truth, even though you have contradicted one another, at leſt, you ſeem not to be all of one mind, as to our preſent ſituations in this country.

A. B. C. & D. Sir, we are obliged to you, for your approbation of us, mean time, as our country is ſo divided in their ſentiments, both in matters concerning time and eternity, ſo we ſhall be glad to hear which of us all four you moſt approve of, as you are ſo very good, as to expreſs yourſelf in all our favours.

E. Gentlemen, I as I ſaid before, am the ſame with the ſimple country man, whom I mentioned; and has heard all of you ſpeak what is true: But, as you have to go home, and as I am a ſtran-

ger,

ger, wants to go to bed: it woul dbe cruel to you, and no leſs to myſelf, to ſpend time further, in the mean time, I ſhall only (as you have defired me) give you a few (and that a very few) obſervations, upon what you have been talking:

1. I obſerve Mr A. has repreſented the preſent ſituation of our country, as it at preſent appears to common obſervation: he admires our fine improvements in the country, which is no doubt, not only an honour, but a viſible profit though the poor has but (in general ſpeaking) a ſmall ſhare of it; except our fine roads, and elegant bridges, for which in many places they pay dear; both by contributions, and likewiſe by toll; both which many of the poor are groaning under. As to our elegance in dreſs; houſe-furniture, and houſe-keeping, which he ſeems vain of, if people keep an eye upon their circumſtances, to which they in juſtice ſhould compare their ſtations, they cannot be condemned; but if they

loſe

loſe ſight of their circumſtances, and exceed; they in ſtead of being an honour, may ſoon hurt others, and become a reproach, and diſgrace to the country. As he ſeems to be proud of mantuamakers and milliners; they may be ſuppoſed to be ſuch in this age, but to be feared a ſhort time will prove more loſs than profit to our land. Our play-houſes, conſerts, maſquerades and other places of diverſion, they may be of uſe for leading young peoples minds much (if not altogether) off the paths of virtue; which is no honour, but a diſgrace to them, who incourage them, and it is to be feared, that our diverſions will in a ſhort time, lead the minds of young people ſo of the ways of virtue and induſtery, that many will be reduced to inferior ſtations of life; and conſequently to reflect with grief upon their ſpending time, and means, by which they are reduced to a neceſſity of living ſo far below what they in gallantry never thought to do; and to add to their grief, the money and

time is both gone; and conſequently they become the diverſion of others, and a griet to themſelves; yea, and perhaps a burden to the public.

As to Mr B. he ſeems to reflect upon our improvements, (very juſtly) as being in a great meaſure planned out for horſes, (many of which is only to admire and feed dogs) which cannot be denied; but, I am ſurpriſed he did not accept our fine crops of potatoes, and other roots for family uſe; which our fore fathers knew little of, and which is a great help for our food: but as he juſtly obſerves, our people of low ſtation are driven thereby to extremities: I have often wondered to ſee ſome gentlemen of the moſt humane and generous diſpoſition, in planing their incloſures and improvements: (notwithſtanding every one has a right to do with their own as they pleaſe) yet, I ſay, I have been ſurpriſed to ſee gentlemen of ſuch valuable endowments, plan out their poor, out of their meen habitations, to ſhift for themſelves; when by building

building ſmall houſes upon out ſkirts of their ground, with ſome little conveniencies, might be a great help to the poor, (if not over rated) and no loſs to the gentlemen, but gain at laſt, as thereby out ſkirts would be improved. As to our gaiety of life, he juſtly obſerves, our youths being brought up in ſuch gallantry, that their aims are carried ſo high, that when in riper years, their minds are ſo tainted with gaiety, that nothing elſe can make them happy, but by imitating (if not exceeding) others, in a higher ſtation. He has gone ſome length, in obſerving the manner of young women, which will not bear contradiction. I only wiſh that young women, who looks upon themſelves, a degree beyond ſervant maids, that they would put their hand to ſervile work with them: or even though their parents circumſtances be good, to hire themſelves to ſervice; this would quality them for being the head of a family; and conſequently judge of ſervants work, &c.

As

As to theſe in higher ſtations, when they are young and perhaps in their father's houſe, when a ſervant is in the kitchen, who knows her buſineſs, if they would go to their kitchen in pretence of helping the cook, they would thereby become in a manner judge what is right: when they become ladies of their own houſes: and when (as often happens) they are ſo unhappie, as to have ſervants not ſo qualified; they will not only order, what ſhould be done, but how it ſhould be done: a lady knowing how buſineſs ſhould be done, is a great bleſſing to a family; eſpecially, when new, or unexperienced ſervants are with them: nothing is more afflicting to an honeſt ſervant, who is aukward to give ſatisfaction, and knows not how, and none to teach her: and it is no leſs afflicting for a ſervant, who knows buſineſs, to be directed by thoſe, who for want of experience, gives wrong directions.—With a view to prevent which, have I given my opinion, as above; mean time,

time, it is obſerved, that ſervants who are raiſed to affluence, proves often the moſt tyranical maſters, and miſtreſſes, (yea, I might have ſaid huſbands or wives) which in a great meaſure confutes what I have been obſerving; but it is commonly ſaid, that beggars cannot bear with wealth. But I muſt, in the mean time, obſerve, that though Mr B. has ſpoke free, as to young women, without taking notice of young men, this occaſions me to give my opinion; which is, that as in general ſpeaking, you are prohibit from your equals, by their manner of dreſs and behaviour. Now, gentlemen, if any of you be unmarried, chuſe out a match for yourſelves, both in perſon and qualification, though inferior to yourſelf in ſtation; which will be much more commendable, than promiſquous leudneſs, which ſeems to take place in our day: and let thoſe ladies who is ſelf-admirers alone, with the grandidear caps, and new faſhioned dreſs.

As for you Mr C. I obſerve you are very

very proud of our religion in this country, of this you are certainly right, if you judge by our profeſſions, and the different ſocieties we are now claſſed in: but, Sir, in my opinion, it is neither the profeſſion, nor the attachment to parties, without practice, that can juſtly be called religion, and this is too obvious to be denied, that little of that is to be ſeen amongſt us in our day.

And as for you Mr D. you juſtly ſeem to obſerve, the common perjury now connived with, and the breach of covenant; which being now ſo common, that it is not looked on as a crime. In former ages, a verbal promiſe was binding, but now oaths ſeem to have little weight upon the conſcience; and even contracted engagements is not binding with many profeſſors, if by law they can be diſannuled; as this is the caſe, no wonder, though we are what we are, ſeing, we not only deal deceitfully with our fellow creatures, but with the Sovereign of heaven and earth, who created and upholds us, is our

our witneſs, and to be our judge.—
And, as to our profeſſors in general;
we all find, that (excluding particulars)
they only make a ſhow and a cloack
of religion, to cover their art and in-
trigues. But, Sir, when ſeſſions are
filled with men, which has no ſigns
of religion, How ſhall the morals of
the people be inquired into! Which
brings to my remembrance an affair,
that came before a ſpecial jury in Lon-
don: A perſon charged a barber, for
ſheaving a gentleman on the Sabbath,
and the proof ſwearing only to his
lathering the face with ſoape, upon
which the barber was diſmiſſed; and
the affair being afterwards talked over,
the foreman of the jury ſaid, "How
could he have condemned the barber,
(ſuppoſing he had been ſheaving) for
doing what he had himſelf been guil-
ty of; (he being often ſhaved on the
Sabbath in like manner:) Suppoſing
a ſeſſion to have a majority of mem-
bers, tho' not guilty of glaring vices,
yet indifferent about religion, or even

acting concealed and ſliely contrary thereto: So I ſay, What ſentence can be expected of ſuch, when immortal actors come before them? Juſt the ſame as the above mentioned jury paſt upon the barbar: a ſimile which was a real fact, and ſuits the compariſon as exact as one glove does another. As to our clergy, you juſtly obſerve, how they are licenced too generally; and tho' we reproach patrons of pariſhes, yet to do them juſtice, I never heard of a preſentation being given to any perſon, who was not licenced by preſbytery; ſo that the patron is not acceſſary in ſettling a pariſh, with ſuch as we judge not fit for having the charge of a congregation, but the preſbytery who licenced him; and what can be expected, if a majority in preſbytery is of ſuch a ſtamp; and if any honeſt members oppoſe ſuch meaſures, they are overpowered, if not by argument, yet by votes; but referring that order of men to GOD and their own conſcience, let us conſider our preſent and diſmal

diſmal ſituation: Is not vice ſtalking in public and private, like a helliſh monſter; in a great meaſure, carrying all before it, betting all that are ſcared or ſerious, out of countenance; and what is not only contrary to our holy religion, but even to morality, is made a common jeſt of; and if a faithful miniſter of the goſpel, in diſcharge of his duty, ſhall give faithful warnings of our danger, he then becomes the ſong of the drunkard; the diverſion of the liſcentious; and even tho' ſly the mockers are incouraged by others, of whom better things might be expected.

But, before we part, let me obſerve that Mr D. has (in my opinion) in his remarks on perjury, either forgot, or has ſome byend, in not including judges and magiſtrates; who alſo are on oath; and are judges under the great lawgivers: and if they give judgement upon any by bad motives or delay; judging in favour of any, to the hurt of others; omit their duty in ſuppreſ-

ſing vice, or actors of villany; or even countenancing a bad cauſe: or favouring the rich to the hurt of the poor, &c. And likewiſe, if we conſider our advocates, which he overlooked alſo, who are upon oath, when they conſert, and delay their client's cauſe, for more money, when they are ſure of good payment, or to oblige the oppoſite, upon the hurt of their client, and conſequently betray truſt: Is not all ſuch perjured perſons, with a witneſs? I refer to yourſelves. Now, gentlemen, having heard you all, I have given you my opinion, in this vulgar and irregular manner; mean time, before we part, I wiſh that when we pretend to look into the conduct of others, we would tamely examine ourſelves; and if divine providence has placed us in any ſtation, either with affluence, or emptineſs, that we may be content, and act in our ſtation, in a ſuitable, contented and becoming manner, (contentment is a large feaſt;) and as it is a common obſervation, that we are become

come lax, and in a great meaſure ſtand in need of a reformation. Now, if us, and every one, who talk thus, would endeavour to reform one (I mean ourſelves) it would be a good ſign: and in order thereto, let us pannel ourſelves, before the court of our conſcience, and if we act fair in that ſcrutiny, we will find enough to be aſhamed of, when we examine into our former conduct, and our preſent ſtate, by which we will not only lament our condition, and endeavour to reform, but alſo, ſee it impoſſible to find acceſs, and reconciliation with a GOD of juſtice; but by virtue of the merit, and intereſt of our glorious and exalted REDEEMER, that it may be, all our mercy and privileges, may GOD grant: Amen.

E.

NOW, gentlemen, we have all had our ſhare in the converſation; let us pay, and you will ſlip home, and I will make for reſt, while it is ſeaſonable hours.

B. Sir, as you are a ſtranger, we will pay what is to pay, and you are heartily welcome.

E. Gentlemen,

E. Gentlemen, I thank you for your offer; but I inſiſt to pay my ſhare. I have been in places, where in one room a dozen of people has been, and each having his own liquor, yet all joined in the converſation; but we have joined in company, converſation and drink: And why ſhould not we pay equal? And let me tell you, gentlemen, were you to pay for me, the event would be, I would call in for another bottle, and perhaps you to make me a mends, would order another in; and this is often the way, that many goes home in untimeous hours: I might have ſaid, are innocently led out of their reaſon, and become the diverſion of others. As this is a rock, upon which many in friendſhip has been ſplit; ſo my opinion (with all ſubmiſſion) is, that when equals is in company, they ſhould pay equal, or if by any tranſactions, one pay for another, that perſon ſhould not offer to pay, as the other paid for him; or if a perſon ſhould upon an agreement, go in to treat company, if he do, and the company out of compliment, will make him a mends, by calling for more liquor; which perhaps will anſwer no end, but to inflame them with liquor; detain them too long, and perhaps to untimeous hours, and ſome to ungarded actions: So I ſay, and I wiſh every one that has any regard for his health, for his character, and his family, would follow this rule, when in company to be regular in drinking, paying and keeping ſeaſonable hours; and this would anſwer many valuable ends; and being very happy of ſo agreeable company, as you all have been, following the ſame rules: I wiſh you good night. As all is clear, I ſhall ever reckon you innocent, moderate, and regular bottle companions; wiſhing you all well home. Fare well.

Sir, We

Sir, We are convinced of your obſervations being juſt, and that you will follow the ſame rules; were it not ſo, we would have another glaſs; and agreeable to your obſervatious, in the public way, we have to ſay, that nothing is more common in private houſes, than when friends, or ſtrangers, are viſitors, that the heads of the family expreſs their regard to them by entertaining them in the beſt manner, according to the rank and circumſtance of the family. It is common, Sir, when the ſtranger at table, declares nature is ſatisfied, as to eating, his word in poſitiveneſs gains credit: But, how common is it, when he has ſaid, from time to time, that he can drink no more, that in order to expreſs friendſhip, he moſt, and does drink and drink again; and as a return of friendſhip, the glaſs is repeated, until the liquor become often maſter of reaſon, manners, and decency: this practice though innocently intended, proves often as fatal (tho' in a private houſe) as your ſtory, relative to public houſes; the conſequence whereof we ſhall leave you to reflect upon, wiſhing you a good night; being glad if ever you come this way, to have the pleaſure of ſeeing you again, that we may correct what has been the ſubject of our converſation; and have a ſecond review of Scotland, both in its glory and deformity, wiſhing you good-night. Fare-well.

C. Gentlemen, could we not ſtop a little and have another glaſs before we part: This is a very innocent, merry, free-hearted companion; and we have been very happy altogether.

Now, gentlemen, after all we have ſaid, there is as fatal (though in friendſhip) a propoſal, as any we have mentioned

mentioned, tho' very common, when company is agreeable, after having enjoyed themſelves to go home; yet without regard to liquor, we will propoſe another glaſs, and then, from one to another, 'till they go to the exceſs, whſch they themſelves does diſapprove of. Let us therefore take an example from the brute creation, who will evaniſh their thriſt and drink no more. And wiſhing that us, and all others, may obſerve this rule, being determined to ſtay no longer, though I am fond of your company. Gentlemen, wiſhing you all a good night, and a happy-morning. Fare-well.

NOW, Neighbour, as you have in your hand theſe few obſervations, whatever your oppinion thereof be; yet, you (I hope) cannot but obſerve a viſible regularity in their foregoing proceedings: inſtead of all wanting to ſpeak at once, each has ſpoke, his mind, without interruption; which I wiſh were a rule in all companys: if it were, it would prevent much diſturbance, which often happens by many ſpeaking at once.

Another thing, you have to obſerve, that tho' they are bottle companions, they have guarded againſt repeated drinking, which too commonly happens, even with people of good ſenſe, and of prudent conduct; who out of compliment to company (without regard to liquor) will join after all is over, or even go to another houſe, to confirm their friendſhip: A cuſtom which often proves ſo fatal, that I hope you, and all wiſe people, will guard againſt; and as theſe 5 bottle companions, ſhew us an example, to go home in due hours, while we are our own maſters, and not governed by liquor, which would prove the devertion of others. Perth, 10th Oct, 1774.

To Brewes

F I N I S,

B L

MQ22